

Redistricting Listening Session FAQ

Q: Will Olmsted County Commissioners be updated on what comments residents had during the redistricting listening sessions?

A: Yes, all comments received during the listening sessions as well as via the website will be shared with commissioners as well as any answers provided via the redistricting FAQs.

Q: Have any maps been drawn by Olmsted County or City of Rochester employees prior to the preliminary drawings of maps by the U.S. Congress and Minnesota State Legislature?

A: As of January 2022, the city has not drawn any preliminary maps. As of January 2022, Olmsted County has not drawn any preliminary maps.

Q: When will residents be able to review draft maps?

A: The city plans to have draft maps available for review from February 21, 2022, through March 4, 2022*. The Rochester Redistricting Policy requires a minimum of two public meetings to gather resident input on the maps. Olmsted County will also provide draft maps for public review before the statutory deadline. The exact timeline for Olmsted County's draft maps is dependent on redistricting processes occurring before the county are completed. In the redistricting process, the county is the last to redistrict.

*Note, this may be delayed if Congressional/Legislative maps are not completed by the February 15th deadline.

Q: What are the redistricting principles on the county and city levels, and is Olmsted County going to approve a resolution or ordinance on redistricting beyond the legal requirements?

A: The Rochester Redistricting Policy was adopted on 12/6/21 and can be found [here](#). Olmsted County does not have a separate policy but follows statutory requirements and the guidelines put forth by the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State.

Q: How are BIPOC and other communities of interest being taken into consideration?

A: The Rochester Redistricting Policy addresses communities of interest: "The City will keep communities of interest in one ward whenever possible. A community of interest refers to a group of people with a common set of concerns that may be affected by legislation. Examples of communities of interest include ethnic, racial, social, and economic groups. Communities of interest will be identified by the City of Rochester and informed by a public engagement process." Both Rochester and Olmsted County are seeking feedback from communities of interest through an online survey and community listening sessions. The Rochester [survey](#) and Olmsted County [survey](#) data will be available when the surveys close.

Q: Is there an opportunity for public input before drafting revised county commissioner ward maps?

A: The listening sessions and [online comment tools](#) are both opportunities to provide input on county commissioner district maps before maps are drafted.

Q: Is there an electronic means for people to add map input?

A: Rochester has [interactive maps](#) that allow for public input on its website. Olmsted County also has [interactive maps](#) on its website.

Q: What happens if the state hasn't adopted maps by the deadline in mid-February?

A: The Minnesota Judicial Branch Special Redistricting Panel has indicated they will likely have maps prepared by mid to late February in anticipation of the Minnesota state legislature surpassing the February 15, 2022, deadline. At this time, we don't see a delay to the process for the City of Rochester. If all other processes occur on time, there will also be no delay in the Olmsted County process.

Q: Who constitutes the redistricting team?

A: The City of Rochester's Redistricting team includes teammates from the following departments: Community Development, Rochester Public Library, Communications and Strategic Engagement, City Attorney's Office, and Administration.

The Olmsted County redistricting team includes Planning; Policy, Analysis, and Communications; County Attorney's Office; and Property Records and Licensing (which manages elections).

Q: Who is reviewing questions and comments regarding redistricting?

A: The Olmsted County Policy, Analysis, and Communications team is reviewing the questions and comments and consulting with responsible departments as needed to provide answers and to share the comments before maps are drafted.

Similarly, the Rochester Redistricting team (membership listed in a previous question) is reviewing the questions and comments and consulting with responsible departments as needed to provide answers and share the comments before maps are drafted.

Q: Does the City of Rochester's Redistricting Policy impact the county?

A: No, these are independent processes. Municipalities are required to redraw ward/precinct boundaries, as applicable, prior to counties redrawing commissioner districts.

Q: Is either the City or County considering a Citizen's Commission to work on Redistricting?

A: The City contemplated creating a limited-term advisory group for Redistricting, which was discussed with City Council at the November 15, 2021, Study Session. Based on feedback from the Council, the City revised the Rochester Redistricting Principles and Policy document. The revision prioritized an increased emphasis on engagement over the creation of a redistricting advisory group. Following the study session, city teammates evaluated the amount of time needed to recruit and convene a limited-term advisory group and the impact this would have on a robust community engagement process. The result would be a reduced timeline of fewer than 4 weeks to engage diverse community residents and map drawing as well as limit the number of engagement interactions and venues given the compressed schedule. By focusing city teammate resources instead on a robust engagement process the engagement timeline increases by 3 weeks and 9 engagement interactions and venues.

Olmsted County values resident input into the redistricting process and has been offering and promoting opportunities for public input since Fall 2021. Additional opportunities will be available once draft maps are prepared and all opportunities will be announced on our website as well as via the media. Like the city, we are prioritizing broad public engagement given the short timeframe that we have available to draw and approve maps.

Q: Caucuses are held in February 2022. What are the chances that we may not be in the same precinct/ward that we caucused in by the time we vote?

A: It is possible you may not be in the same precinct/ward in the next election (if/where applicable the August 2022 primary election, and the November 2022 general election). Based on the new population of Rochester, each ward will likely add a precinct. The ideal ward size based on 2020 Census data is 20,233. Wards 1 and 3 will need to reduce their population and Wards 2, 4, 5, and 6 will need to increase their population. As a result, it is possible your precinct and or ward may change before the next election.

Q: Who locally participates in the process?

A: All members of the community are invited to provide feedback and comments through our [online survey](#) or by mailing their comments to:

Olmsted County Government Center
c/o PAC
151 4th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904

Q: Will you cover possible changes already obvious (any indications)?

A: All changes will be presented with the draft maps and will be available for public comment.

Q: How do we de-politicize the process?

A: Redistricting at the local level (City and County) does not involve maps provided by politicians or political parties. The redistricting teams, who are not elected officials themselves (membership listed in a previous question above), for each entity draw draft maps, solicit public comment, and based on public comments, amend the maps to create a final map. Final maps are presented to the elected bodies for approval: Rochester City Council approves ward maps and Olmsted County Commissioners approve County Commissioner maps.

Q: What is the relationship between the congressional/legislative redistricting and local redistricting?

A: These processes are independent, but rely on the maps provided in the previous step. In Minnesota, the Congressional and Legislative maps are redrawn first, with a deadline of February 15th for completion and approval by the State Legislature. If the State Legislature fails to meet that deadline, a Minnesota Judicial Branch Special Redistricting Panel takes over and provides Congressional and Legislative maps. Once those maps are received, cities then begin the redistricting process, with a deadline of March 29, 2022. After the County receives the new maps from the cities within the county, the County may begin their redistricting process. The County must complete their process to redraw Commissioner districts by April 26, 2022.